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 Department of Library Special Collections
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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 531 FORT Williams – Glasgow, Kentucky

1½ boxes. 16 folders. 322 items. 1860-1999. Originals, photocopies, photographs.

1997.236.1

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Fort Williams (also known as Fort Boyle and Fort Hobson) was a Civil War fortification located at Glasgow, Kentucky. Early in 1863, when Glasgow and Tompkinsville constituted the most important positions in southern Kentucky recaptured from the Confederates, Union troops began arriving at Cave City by train, then marching to Glasgow to join the 23rd Army Corps of General Henry M. Judah. From there, scouting parties traversed the area in search of Confederate raiders, especially John Hunt Morgan and his men. Major General Horatio G. Wright, Commander of the Department of the Ohio, ordered construction of a fortification at Glasgow to watch for Confederate incursions from the south, defend cavalry rendezvous, and protect the railroad embarkation point at Cave City. Completed in late summer 1863, the fort was officially named Fort Williams in May 1864 in honor of Brigadier General Thomas Williams, killed at the Battle of Baton Rouge in 1862. Troops did not camp inside the fort itself, but it enclosed multiple cannon positions and a few small structures, including a supply warehouse.

On 6 October 1863, the only significant engagement at Fort Williams took place when approximately 120 Confederate soldiers under the command of Colonel John M. Hughes staged a surprise raid on Glasgow, the fort, and surrounding encampments. Union troops retained control of Fort Williams for the rest of the war, but afterward it was abandoned and fell into disrepair as its earthworks collapsed and the surrounding trench filled with silt.

Interest in restoring the fort grew in the 1950s and 1960s, and a historical marker was placed on the site in 1969. In 1976, the Fort Williams Restoration Commission, seeking to restore the fort to the condition in which it existed prior to the attack by Colonel Hughes, secured funding for the project from the National Park Service, the Kentucky Heritage Commission, and the City of Glasgow. Restoration architect Charles Lessig conducted extensive research pertaining to the original construction and historical context of the fort. Dr. Jack M. Schock of the Department of Archaeology at Western Kentucky University conducted archaeological excavations in 1977-1978 to facilitate more accurate reconstruction. G. Reynolds Watkins, Consulting Engineers, Inc., Bowling Green, Kentucky prepared plans and specifications for the restoration under the supervision of Vice President Brents Dickinson III and Charles Lessig. The local project supervisor was Charles B. Honeycutt, chairman of the Fort Williams Restoration Commission. Funding limitations required a reduction in the original scope of the

project, but the reconstruction contract was awarded to Barton Construction Company, Inc. of Glasgow and work was completed in 1980.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection contains material relating to the excavation and reconstruction of Fort Williams, Glasgow, Kentucky. The material dates primarily from 1977-1979, but includes some documentation of a restoration initiative in the 1950s and 1960s (Folder 3). Included are planning documents, correspondence, and budgets relating to the project concept and funding (Box 1, Folders 4, 5) as well as historical research gathered primarily by restoration architect Charles Lessig from the *Official Records*, contemporary letters and diaries, regimental histories and military sources on fortification construction and on munitions (Box 2). Also included are historical research reports (original and revised) by G. Reynolds Watkins (GRW) Consulting Engineers (Box 1, Folder 6), archaeological excavation reports by Dr. Jack Schock of WKU (Box 1, Folder 7), a contemporary diagram of the Fort (Box 2, Folder 5) and photographic proof sheets showing the fort site at the time of the excavation (Box 2, Folder 5).

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Fort Williams – Glasgow, Kentucky	1967-1999	95 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Articles about Fort Williams and restoration	1967-1999	4 items
Folder 3	Correspondence, research regarding historical marker, restoration	1956-1969	16 items
Folder 4	Contracts, correspondence, budgets, etc. relating to restoration	1976-1977	34 items
Folder 5	Contracts, correspondence, budgets, etc. relating to restoration	1978-1979	33 items
Folder 6	"The History of Fort Williams 1863-1865" reports by GRW Consulting Engineers; letter of comment from Charles Lessig	1977	3 items
Folder 7	Reports on archaeological excavations	1977-1978	4 items
BOX 2	Fort Williams – Glasgow, Kentucky	1860-1978	227 items
Folder 1	Research from <i>Official Records</i>	1862-1863	15 items

Folder 2	Letters, military telegrams, contemporary documents regarding Fort Williams	1863-1864	49 items
Folder 3	Regimental histories, data regarding troops serving at Fort Williams	1867-1929, n.d.	21 items
Folder 4	Manuals, reports on construction of fortifications	1860-1865	10 items
Folder 5	Sketches, plans, photographs of Fort Williams	1862-1978	6 items
Folder 6	Miscellaneous research notes	n.d.	33 items
Folder 7	Miscellaneous research notes	n.d.	31 items
Folder 8	Miscellaneous research – Note cards	n.d.	54 items
Folder 9	List of oversized materials (shelved in C1,D3)	1863-1978	8 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS FORT Williams – Glasgow, Kentucky 1860-1999
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Correspondence, research, historical and archaeological reports, contracts, budgets and other documents relating to the 1970s excavation and restoration of Fort Williams, a Civil War fortification at Glasgow, Kentucky.

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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Archaeology – Glasgow

Boyle, Jeremiah Tilford, 1818-1871 – Relating to
Chelf, Frank Leslie, 1907-1982 – Correspondence B1,F3

Civil War, 1861-1865 – Fortifications – Glasgow

Civil War, 1861-1865 – Glasgow – Relating to

Hobson, Edward Henry, 1825-1901 – Relating to

Honeycutt, Charles Bethel, 1926-2004 – Correspondence

Lessig, Charles Walter, 1905-1994 – Correspondence

Schock, Jack M.

Williams, Thomas R., 1815-1862 – Relating to

